

MINUTES

Kentucky Oral History Commission

May 16, 2000

Spindletop Hall

Lexington, Kentucky

Attending:

Commission Members

Lillian Press, Chair
Connie Alexander
Mattie Brown
Kevin Graffagnino
Carl Greene
John Hardin
Debbie McGuffey Thomas

Advisors

Terry Birdwhistell
Bill Ellis
Tracy K'Meyer
Marty Newell
Michael Ann Williams

Guests

Marlene Helm, Secretary
Education, Arts and Humanities Cabinet

Staff:

Kathleen Bond, Secretary
Doug Boyd, Archivist
Betsy Brinson, Civil Rights Project Director
Kim Lady Smith, Director

Lil Press, commission chair, opened the meeting at 9:40 am. Press welcomed new member Connie Alexander and asked that everyone present introduce himself or herself. Press also welcomed Secretary Marlene Helm.

Debbie McGuffey Thomas moved to dispense with the reading of the minutes from the previous meeting and that they be approved as circulated. Mattie Brown seconded the motion, approved by the commission.

At this time Kim Lady Smith presented the director's report. Smith reported that \$27,511 had been awarded in grants in the current fiscal year leaving an available grant balance of \$2,489. Smith recommended that any new grant awards be funded in the next fiscal year (July 1) and that the balance be made available to cover a deficit in the operating allocation.

Smith then explained that the 2000 General Assembly had approved a grant appropriation increase of \$64,000 and provided coverage of Betsy Brinson's salary. Those actions brought the annual grant appropriation to \$125,000, the largest in the history of the commission. Smith presented members with her recommendation for allocation of the grant funds (see attached) that was approved by the general consensus of members.

Smith informed members that Governor Patton had reappointed Doug Stern and John Hardin to the commission for four-year terms and had appointed new member Connie Alexander to a four-year term. Smith recommended that former commission member Marty Newell be appointed to serve on the advisory board for a term to expire December 1, 2000. John Hardin moved to appoint Newell to the advisory board as recommended by Smith. Debbie McGuffey Thomas seconded the motion, approved by the commission. Smith also informed members that the terms of three members were scheduled to expire on February 15, 2001 – Debbie McGuffey Thomas, Lil Press, and Mattie Brown.

At this time Press called on Betsy Brinson to report on the civil rights symposium held in February at the History Center. Brinson informed members that between 250 and 300 people had attended the very successful symposium. Media coverage had been excellent and evaluations were very positive. Lil Press and Kevin Graffagnino spoke highly of the event.

Press called on Graffagnino, director of the Kentucky Historical Society, to address the first year successes of the History Center. Graffagnino referred to the civil rights symposium as the best event to be sponsored in the History Center during its first year and stressed that the Society and the History Center needed to focus on being responsive to the needs and interests of the people of Kentucky. He also spoke on the tremendous visitation during the first year and his vision for the agency.

Press then engaged members in a discussion of 25th anniversary activities, specifically the anniversary dinner. Members stressed that the dinner, to be held in November or early December, would honor the work of the commission as well as recognize the contributions of founding members John Ed Pearce, Al Smith, and Governor Carroll who established the commission. Various possible speakers were discussed. Members agreed generally that the cost of the dinner should be kept as low as possible. Connie Alexander suggested that the yearlong activities should include regional dinners to celebrate the work done by people statewide.

At this time Doug Boyd reported on his work to provide information on the commission through the Historical Society's new web site. He also discussed progress being made on the collection database and statewide guide. The radio series, another 25th anniversary activity, was discussed and Boyd presented a demo of a possible format for the series. Members discussed the pros and cons of the format and public radio versus commercial radio distribution. It was suggested that Boyd contact the Kentucky Broadcasters Association.

At this time Press called for a ten-minute break.

The meeting resumed with a report from Betsy Brinson on plans for the civil rights project. Brinson explained her interview schedule that would include a two-week trip into western Kentucky, plans for hiring an intern, and production of a video on the civil rights movement in Kentucky. She reported that the advisory board for the project had met in early May and agreed that the primary audience for the video would be 11th grade students, but that it would be artistic and creative enough to interest an adult audience. The documentary would be aired on KET and the Department of Education had committed funds and staff to develop associated curriculum materials. Members discussed fundraising for the project and suggested such sources as Brown and Williamson, the Southern Arts Federation, TVA, the Kentucky Arts Council and the Kentucky Humanities Council.

At this time members considered the extension requests before the commission.

Like a Member of the Family

Deborah Spearing and Juanita White requested a grant period extension of four months. Smith recommended that the completion date be set at September 30, 2000. John Hardin moved to extend the completion date for the project "Like a Member of the Family" to September 30, 2000. Carl Greene seconded the motion, approved by the commission.

A Biography of Joy Bale Boone, Kentucky Poet Laureate (transcription)

Dr. Loretta Murrey requested an extension to December 31, 2000. Debbie McGuffey Thomas moved to approve the extension as requested. Mattie Brown seconded the motion, approved by the commission.

Members then considered a technical assistance grant application.

Memories of Clifton

Tracy K'Meyer and the Clifton Community Council requested two recorders and a \$250 honorarium for K'Meyer through a technical assistance grant request. The project would document the history of the Clifton community and K'Meyer would provide training to volunteer interviewers. After discussion, Kevin Graffagnino moved to approve the request. Debbie McGuffey Thomas seconded the motion, approved by the commission.

Member considered the grant applications before the commission. Members agreed that funds for any approved grants would be drawn from the next fiscal year budget.

Whippin the Devil

Anthony Sloane and Appalshop requested \$4,000 to conduct interviews with Guy Roberts on life in the 1930's from the Kentucky/Virginia border across World War II America. The video interviews would serve as the basis for a documentary. Debbie McGuffey Thomas presented the review committee's recommendation that the application be approved in the amount of \$3,500. After discussion, John Hardin moved to approve the application as recommended by the review committee. Connie Alexander seconded the motion, approved by the commission.

The Stories of Kentucky Sheriffs

Charlotte Ann Day requested \$903.32 to conduct up to 29 interviews with sheriffs and with relatives and associates of sheriffs killed in the line of duty. Thomas explained that the review committee recommended funding of \$500 for travel with the commission providing recording equipment. She further explained that the committee was concerned over the focus of the interview content and recommended that an historian be identified to provide consultation to Day. Thomas moved to approve the application as recommended by the review committee. John Hardin seconded the motion, approved by the commission.

Transcriptions of the Carl D. Perkins Oral History Project Interviews

Bill Ellis requested \$3,000 to transcribe 40 hours of interviews collected on the life and career of Congressman Carl Perkins. Pauletta Perkins would complete the transcripts and would be the project grantee. Debbie McGuffey Thomas explained that the review committee recommended

approval of the application as requested and moved that the application be approved. Carl Greene seconded the motion, approved by the commission.

Creating Interracial Democracy: The Civil Rights Movement in Louisville, Kentucky, 1941-1976

Tracy K'Meyer requested \$2,000 to transcribe 39 hours of interviews in her project to document the civil rights movement in Kentucky. Debbie McGuffey Thomas explained that the review committee recommended approval based on the commission's emphasis on the civil rights movement. Thomas moved to approve the application as requested. John Hardin seconded the motion, approved by the commission.

At this time Kim Lady Smith congratulated Bill Ellis on the publication of his book The Kentucky River that was based on interviews he collected in communities along the river.

Betsy Brinson informed members of her plans to conduct interviews on suffrage in Kentucky and asked for any recommendations on possible interviews.

Lil Press adjourned the meeting at 11:35 am.

(At the lunch immediately following the meeting members recognized Kathleen Bond, commission secretary, who is retiring on July 31. Members presented her with a gift.)